

valentine (valen-mine)

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by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

Dream also knows, objectively, that George is attractive.

This isn't something he's afraid to admit for a multitude of reasons, firstly being that, for any other pair of guy friends, maybe it would have been a little weird.

Dream and George are not any other pair of guy friends. Dream threatens to kiss George on the mouth continuously. George threatens to hit him with his baseball bat.

Dream is completely fine with multiple people asking his best friend out during the week of Valentine's Day.

He has no issue with it.

None at all.

Notes

disclaimer: if anyone in this fic expresses any discomfort to being in it, i will gladly delete this and also myself

thank u 2 my sugar plum honey sunshine gummy bear dootsit pop [ari](#) for reading thru this and being very nice to me ily !!! ok byebye

>[if u would like to listen to the playlist](#)

happy reading!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Dream knows quite a lot about George.

It was a given, really, being friends for over six years, and roommates for nearly three. It's expected that Dream knows a bit about George, whether he likes it or not. Dream has an entire compartment in his brain labeled *George*, and it's bigger than he likes to think about.

This compartment consists of the many quirks of George; his slight allergy to pollen, his recent affliction to chocolate croissants, the fact George owns more sweatpants than jeans, his dislike for waking up and having to cook for himself.

Dream also knows, objectively, that George is attractive.

Not in a weird way— obviously, *obviously*, Dream doesn't mean it in a weird way, he isn't going out of his way to call his best friend good looking, even if he is, but George being attractive— it's a simple truth. The grass is green, the sky is blue, and George is attractive.

This isn't something he's afraid to admit for a multitude of reasons, firstly being that, for any other pair of guy friends, maybe it would have been a little weird.

Dream and George are not any other pair of guy friends. Dream threatens to kiss George on the mouth continuously. George threatens to hit him with his baseball bat.

There's also the fact that, really, it's a well-known truth that local college resident Dream's Best Friend George is attractive. Dream himself had come to realize quickly, and, after witnessing multiple strangers on the street pause to smile at George shyly and offer him their phone number, he knows it isn't just him that thinks so.

It's a thing he had known the second he had met George, by the man's contrast of soft features and a sharp jaw, sharp tongue, his starlight eyes, a nice arch of a cupid's bow and hands the perfect size to hold. He's attractive in his ability to converse effortlessly with strangers, his bright personality and easy laugh. Dream is able to say this all with no indication of a crush. It's simply a *fact*.

So, *objectively*, without bias, Dream knows George is attractive. It's something he has come to terms with over the years, and he's at peace with this. He's accepted the truth.

That being said, Dream hates Valentine's Day— just a little. A lottle. A lot.

"I think I'm going to bash my head in," George stumbles into Dream's room to groan, and Dream barely looks up from his book to watch George land face first into his bed.

There's a second of silence, before, if Dream listens very quietly, the faint sound of muffled yelling follows. It takes a second to realize it's coming from George, and Dream sets aside his book. F. Scott Fitzgerald can wait for a later time.

"Okay," Dream calmly responds, and gets up from his chair to sit on his bed, a squeaking sound following as he moves to offer a gentle pat to George's head. "Is there any particular reason, or are you feeling extra dramatic today?"

"I'm not being *dramatic*."

George's face is mildly flushed pink when he raises his head, looking a moment away from strangling him. Dream is glad George can't reach his neck. Maybe he could, with the assistance of a step-ladder.

"*Martin Goodworth*," he spits, with such animosity that Dream almost feels bad for Martin Goodworth, "asked me to be his valentine."

Maybe this is quite the pretentious thing to complain about, seeing as many go without being asked such a question during love season, but Dream knows better.

The weeks before and of Valentine's Day are nothing short of torture for someone like George, who hates surprises, romantic gestures, confrontation, having to reject people to their face, public humiliation, and the general population of their college campus. George hates a lot of things, now that Dream thinks about it.

At Dream's raised eyebrows, George elaborates, "He was the one who bumped into me that one time and spilled his stupid green tea all over my white hoodie." He widens his eyes. "And then he blamed it on *me*."

Well. It was *Dream's* hoodie, actually, but he wasn't going to correct George, and especially not right now, when George looks vaguely capable of murdering someone. He had always looked better in it, anyway.

"Oh," Dream replies, hand still in George's hair, and he continues his patting, "you never gave me the name of that guy."

"That's because I didn't find out his name until today," George grumbles, dropping his head back onto Dream's pillow, facing sideways and looking up at Dream. "He decided to swap seats with the person who usually sits next to me, and asked me to be his valentine before class." George makes a face. "*Before* class, so after I told him politely that, no, I will not be his valentine, we had to spend the next two hours sitting next to each other awkwardly."

"Hm," Dream replies, offering an emphasized, sympathetic pat, and then, despite having heard of this man twice, adds, "he sounds like a dick." Because he does, if just for the fact of inconveniencing George.

"He *is*," George huffs, and rolls over. Dream drops his hand, too conscious of it when he places both his hands on his lap. "We've never even had a proper conversation, I don't even know why he thought I'd say yes." There is a moment of contemplation. "I'm going to drop out."

Dream raises his eyebrows. "You're going to drop out of college because of Martin Goodworth?"

George grimaces, tilting his head to look at him. "Alright, well, when you say it like that, it sounds much more pathetic."

"Maybe," he stands up, feeling George's watchful eyes as he returns back to his chair, spinning slightly when he sits down, "that's because it is."

"Shut up," he hears George mutter, and there's the brief sound of rustling sheets, and Dream turns around, book in hand, to see George wriggling his way under Dream's covers. When they meet eyes, George yawns exaggeratedly. "Goodnight."

Dream blinks. "It's three p.m."

"*Goodnight*," George emphasizes, and leaves Dream no choice but to let him sleep in his bed.

Dream rolls his eyes as he returns to his book.

Pretty privilege.

Generally speaking, however, Dream didn't really *hate* Valentine's Day.

Well. Maybe that's putting it lightly.

He simply has a broad indifference to it, which had turned to a slight dislike after sympathizing with George's complaints for the holiday, and now couldn't find it in him to give it a proper consideration.

It's never been a holiday that he's prioritized, either. It has never compared to Halloween or Christmas, and, if Dream isn't in a relationship or pining over someone, he couldn't care less. High school sweethearts and elementary crushes behind, Dream would rather spend Valentine's Day asleep, or with George. In a platonic, no-homo-bro way.

Oftentimes, he is thankful for his own unintentionally intimidating atmosphere, which wards off most valentine confessions, and the way it is not often he receives an offer to spend Valentine's Day with someone else. Dream couldn't care for it enough.

"Hey," someone says, and Dream looks up from his paper to see a girl holding her own paper. "Dream, right?"

Dream gives a nod, lost. He has never spoken to anyone in this class, except for the girl next to him who periodically asks him for his notes. He's embarrassed every time he has to hand over his mess of notetaking. He isn't even sure if she can read his notes.

"I am," he answers, and the girl smiles.

"I'm Jane," she introduces. "Do you want to be partners? For the project, I mean. I don't— really know anyone else in this class," she confesses, a sheepish smile as she fiddles with her hands.

"Sure," Dream accepts, glad he wouldn't have to find someone to ask himself, and relief blooms on her face as she nods. "Um. Do you have any ideas what to do, or?"

"Yeah, yeah, I do," she is quick to reply, pulling out her notebook. "Here, wait, I wrote down some ideas—"

Don't get him *wrong*, he'd always put in effort whenever a past partner of his would ask to spend the day together, would try and scrounge up a good handmade gift and a sweet dinner together, the classic things, and if a few failed attempts at making a gift box had him harboring a slight distaste for the holiday, then that is no one's business but his.

Nonetheless, he thinks as his professor returns to the lecture, fidgeting with his pen as he lets himself zone out, he likes his current situation, no matter how mildly embarrassing his lack of a love life is. He likes the lack of pressure on Valentine's Day, likes spending it with George. Dream wouldn't be able to make himself care about it enough.

"Library, Thursday?" He suggests, and Jane bobs her head in a nod.

"Sure, does five o'clock work?"

"It does," Dream agrees, and zips up his backpack.

Perhaps George didn't care for it either, and was only forced to out of the many confessions he gets in the days prior. It isn't as though George ever accepts anyone who confesses, usually spending Valentine's at home with Dream regardless.

And maybe it's because of his own ego, Dream rationalizes as he walks out of the lecture hall and back home, that he feels a smidge of pride at the fact that, for all the people that ask George to be their valentine, he still spends the day with Dream.

It's only eleven a.m., and Dream vaguely feels like joining George in the head bashing.

The nearing holiday amps up the romance on the university's campus, and it's obvious— obvious by the cheesy decorations students had hung up and plastered around, by the love songs blaring on nearby radios, by the first love feeling of spring, despite it being winter, by the way Dream cannot look anywhere without accidentally spotting a couple making out.

And, okay, Dream understands; being young and in love, people are eager to be affectionate, eager to showcase their love for each other. He knows, from experience, that it isn't meant to be in his face, that the couples indulging themselves in public are simply blind to everything else besides each other. He knows that it's just an expression of their love, and that, if he's really that annoyed, all he has to do is ignore it.

This does not prevent Dream's urge to jump off a building.

"Look who it is, my favorite customer!" Karl greets, brightening where he occupies the register.

The line for the café is nonexistent today, the day seemingly slowing down, although the rest of the cafe is moderately occupied, with people filling in the tables. It's a little before lunch, the usual time for Dream's arrival, and Karl expects him at this point, yet never fails to look delighted.

He swipes down the counter with a rag, before tossing it out of view. His hair is dyed pink, much different from the brown it was yesterday, and Dream absently remembers Sapnap calling him last night and asking about the side effects of accidentally consuming hair bleach.

"Hey, Karl," he returns, offering a smile. "Nice hair."

"Thanks," Karl beams, raising a hand to tug on it, as if he'd forgotten about it completely. "I am never letting Sapnap anywhere near hair dye ever again."

Dream quirks an eyebrow, pulling out his wallet. "Was it that bad?"

"Our entire bathroom," Karl begins, "looks like a murder scene, and there was definitely some sort of struggle."

He throws a crumpled up napkin at Dream when he laughs, and goes on to make two drinks at his request. Dream keeps Karl company as he works, wandering to the side, and Karl says, "Give me a second.", before he disappears into the back, leaving Dream to fend for himself, vulnerable and afraid.

He people-watches as he waits. There are a few who are sitting alone in the café with headphones on and, presumably, studying. Dream doesn't know how anyone could study with a couple making out at the table next to him. He can't help it when he grimaces.

He winces when he catches sight of another couple, and turns around to stare at the menu overhead instead.

Karl raises an eyebrow at Dream when he comes back, placing two drinks onto the counter. "What?"

“What?” Dream echoes, although he can tell *what* ; his mouth is still set in disdain, obvious discomfort on his face.

“You,” Karl begins, “look like you want to die. In the nicest way possible. I mean this nicely.” Dream makes a face, and silently tilts his head toward the corner, and Karl follows his line of vision before pressing his lips together. “Oh.”

“I can’t escape them,” Dream says calmly, resisting the urge to cry. “Everywhere I look, there’s a couple making out. I hate this. I hate it.”

Karl pops a lid onto both drinks. “Just say you get no bitches.” Dream does a double take, and Karl shrugs. “I’m just saying.”

“You’re dating *Sapnap*,” Dream argues, as if it was worse. Well.

“Completely unrelated to the conversation,” Karl waves off. “Give me my fifty percent tip and go to your lover boy.”

“*Lover boy*,” Dream scoffs, but shoves a five dollar tip into the jar and makes his way out of the café. “Bye.”

“Thanks, come again!” Karl calls, and the bell jingles at Dream’s exit.

When George finally steps out of the building, he vaguely looks like he’d just gone through all nine circles of Hell. Dream spots him from where he sits on a bench, raising an eyebrow at George’s emotionless appearance, slouched over and eyes squinting.

He looks around a few times before he catches sight of Dream, making a quick path to reach him. They meet in the middle, and Dream grins.

“Why’re you so happy,” George asks, and looks down when Dream places a drink into his hand. He slowly raises it to his lips, and Dream watches attentively, George’s Adam’s apple bobbing, and he smacks his lips exaggeratedly. “Thanks.”

“No problem.” Dream holds George’s wrist lightly, faint to the touch while he navigates them to the general direction of their apartment, hovering close enough that their arms stay in contact. “And I’m not *so* happy. I’m just— generally content with life.”

“Well, stop it,” George mutters, and takes a long swig of tea. He blinks, before inhaling deep and straightening his posture. “I’m going home, and I am going to eat our entire fridge.”

Dream raises his eyebrows. “We can order in?”

“I’m eating the fridge,” George reiterates, before considering, “I want noodles. I haven’t had any in, like, eight years.”

“We had some literally last week,” Dream mumbles, and pulls out his phone. “Usual place?”

“Yeah,” George nods, and then they both abruptly halt.

A guy Dream vaguely recognizes as being on their football team, dressed in a pink button up and gelled-back hair, stands in front of them, holding a small bouquet of roses and looking very nervous.

Dream blinks, a little lost, but George seems to know where this is going when he lets out a subtle sigh and greets, “Hello.”

“Hi, George,” the guy pointedly returns, sparing no look at Dream. “Can I talk to you?” George nods, and when none of them move, he adds, “Alone?”

“Oh,” Dream’s mouth shapes, and he drops George’s wrist to awkwardly shuffle away. He wonders if it would be socially acceptable to stay a few feet close, just to eavesdrop. He has a vague idea of the situation.

He only begins putting the pieces together while he pretends to scroll through his phone, holding a baited breath while the guy talks just a little too loud.

“– saw you in the library– couldn’t look away– know we’ve never really talked but– and I was– coffee?”

Dream has only witnessed a confession to George once, a year ago and the day before Valentine’s day, after George had suggested they stay home and watch a movie because neither of them had any classes the next day and George wanted to rewatch *The Social Network*.

Dream had watched as George plastered on a polite smile and tucked his hands together, and the girl handed him a poem she had written and George had been flattered but had to decline, as he already had plans, and the girl had been understanding and gave her his number anyway and Dream had wanted to cover his ears and walk away very quickly.

Dream can barely handle watching these moments, he isn’t sure how George manages to live through them. It should’ve been expected that he’d witness another one eventually, and now, here he is, standing just a few feet away and incredibly interested in the imprints of his shoes on the snow beneath him.

He resists the urge to simply toss George over his shoulder and walk them home, saving them both the slight embarrassment of the situation, but he digresses. If the embarrassment didn’t kill him, George would.

George responds too quietly to be heard, and there’s a moment when they exchange further words, a continuing conversation.

Dream takes the time to dissect the man; his black, gelled hair, a few strands loose and falling away. George has never liked product in his hair, he knows, and Dream scarcely uses any product himself, outside of the occasional gelling on formal occasions.

The man is just a few inches short of being as tall as Dream, and he has a strong build, certainly from being a football player. Dream had also played football, so many years ago, but he had never gotten the large, squarish form of a player, and especially not now, after not having properly played in almost three years, impromptu games with Sapnap in his apartment aside.

Their conversation continues, and Dream continues to pretend to be incredibly interested in his home screen until, miraculously, the man turns away, bouquet still in arm. George turns back to look at Dream, and he takes it as his cue to walk forward.

“Another confession?” Dream asks pointlessly, and looks down at a fallen rose, slightly crumpled.

“Yeah,” George sighs, and watches as Dream kneels down to pick it up. He rolls his eyes when Dream offers it to him. He accepts. “I hate disappointing them.”

“It’s not your fault,” Dream reassures.

George shrugs, twirling the crumpled rose between his fingers, and they walk. It’s silent for a few minutes, and Dream almost begins to worry, before George leans over and shoves the rose down Dream’s shirt.

“*George!*” Dream yelps, nearly spilling his drink as he worms the rose out of his shirt, and he shudders at the feeling of slightly moist petals brushing against his skin. “Idiot, what the fuck?”

George laughs next to him, cheeks pink, and Dream’s chest strangely constricts. He ignores it to push at the other man.

“It was funny!” George tries to reason, smiling wide.

Dream rolls his eyes, but he’s smiling, too.

Dream tries to imagine his future, in times of distress.

This usually works best when Quackity, occasionally, shows up on their front doorstep and asks to borrow all the peanut butter they have, and if Dream has a spare bike he can use, and Dream spends a silent twenty seconds reminding himself that, in a few years, he’ll have finished his degree and will take a long, long vacation on the coast of some remote island very, very, very far from here.

This, unfortunately, does not work as well when he needs to be using his brain to focus. This is also not a good thing when Dream is incapable of being intermediate with his attention, needing all his attention captured or not at all, and no in-between.

Dream considers this wretched Thursday afternoon, spent trying to digest twenty pages of text and take comprehensible notes about the content, a time of distress. He wonders if his degree was worth all this work. Probably not. He vaguely wishes he were a fish.

A sudden buzz of his phone jerks him out of his fish-life fantasies, and he pulls his phone out.

George

Are you busy

Dream blinks awake, lips quirking upward as he types out a response. It’s only eight in the evening. He isn’t sure what George could need right now.

me

why

George

I’m bored

He lets out a light scoff, unintentional, and a small smile as he types back, before placing his phone back down. He clears his throat, and returns to the page in front of him.

“Boyfriend?” Jane questions cross from him, a slight smile playing at her lips. He returns it.

Dream shakes his head. “No, just a friend,” he corrects, and ignores the slight thump in his chest.

He clears his throat again, but it doesn't budge. It doesn't help with his wandering mind, and he hasn't been able to focus for the past twenty-three minutes. "Sorry, do you mind if we continue this later?"

"Not at all," she waves off, hurrying to pack up her own things. She almost looks nervous when she asks, "Same time, tomorrow?"

Dream nods easily, "Sure." He shoves his folders back into his bag, and shrugs on his backpack. "See you."

"Bye," Jane smiles, and Dream makes his way out of the library.

It's in short time that he arrives home, dumping his things by the door as he wanders off to freshen up. George is nowhere to be seen all the while, and half of Dream almost begins to wonder if, in the thirteen minutes it had taken to walk from the library, George had left the house.

Dream's room seems unappealing at the moment, too isolating for his like, and he instead finds himself collapsing onto the couch of their living room.

He digs around the cushions for the remote, flipping through the channels to find something mind numbing, slouching back and letting his head fall against the arm rest when he does so.

It's a short time that he's alone, and he's barely focused on the television when George emerges, looking a little bit like a mess.

"Move," George demands as he walks over to the couch, blanket wrapped around his shoulders, and Dream grunts as he rolls over, legs dangling off the couch and his upper torso stretched strangely onto the cushions. George just barely trips over his limbs, and collapses in the space next to him. "Give me attention."

"Attention," Dream replies smartly, huffing while arranging his body in a way that does not make him feel similar to a human pretzel. He receives a light jab for his reply, barely felt through his hoodie, yet it has his side feeling strangely tingly anyway. "Ow."

"Idiot," George says sympathetically. It's silent as George reaches over Dream's limp and dying body for the remote, and Dream lets him change the channel. Part of the blanket falls over his thigh. It's warm. Dream hadn't realized how cold he felt. He shivers.

George shifts beside him, unraveling the blanket until it falls onto his lap, and he grabs a fistful of its side and throws it over Dream, whose head immediately disappears, save for tufts out of his hair still poking out.

"Thanks," Dream says, and raises his legs back onto the couch, bent at the knees so as to not crush George.

"Shut up," George answers, eyes still on the screen, and Dream grins.

Moments pass as each of them watch the television, but it grows boring when Dream realizes it's a movie he's seen already, disinterest eroding at him while he fiddles with a stray thread on the blanket. He chews on his lip, and looks over at George.

His face is pale in the bluelight, living room dark by the late hour. It makes their home feel more personal, as though they're closed off from the rest of the world, and Dream has never really liked

spending nights by his lonesome. He's glad George had joined him when he did.

George's shirt is crumpled, and he must've just woken up from a nap, seeing thin lines of fabric imprinted on the side of his face. His under-eyes are a bit puffy, but he looks nice, with his hair on the messy side, sticking every way. Dream wants to reach out, tug George close.

"What?"

Dream blinks, and George is looking back at him, unperturbed but still questioning when they meet eyes. "What?"

"You were staring at me," George clarifies, crossing his legs underneath him.

"You look nice," Dream says. "I like your hair like this."

George stares at him, still, before he blinks very slowly, owlshly, and then says, "Shut up."

But Dream keeps looking, watches pink curl up to George's cheeks, blunt yet shy when George turns back to the television, lips turned upward, just barely, where a stranger would have missed it. Dream is no stranger.

His stomach turns oddly, a ribbon coiling in his ribcage and tugging, tugging, pulling his heart out of place and out of rhythm.

Dream frowns, blames the feeling on the dark hour, and returns to the movie.

Valentine's Day, in their little circle of friends, has never been regarded as a big deal.

Sapnap has always been in favor of spending Valentine's Day playing CSGO until his eyes were bleary and burning, or staying the night over at Dream and George's home, lazing around during breakfast the next morning, and this had kept up before he started dating and left the rest of them to fend for themselves.

Alex Quackity would rather be dead than caught spending Valentine's Day with their friend group. He talks something about *maintaining his admirable reputation*, but Dream remembers him drinking pool water last week during a game of Truth or Dare. He had picked truth.

Karl always wound up accidentally agreeing to a date without realizing a date, and the eve of Valentine's Day with Karl was often spent with him having a last minute epiphany before calling the rest of them because *what do you mean she has a crush on me I get dinner with friends all the time what do you mean tomorrow's Valentine's Day* –

(This habit, thankfully, ended as soon as he started properly dating. This would be great, if not for the fact that the rest of their friend group realized how blaringly single they were while Sapnap and Karl spent Valentine's Day together.)

Dream, however, usually spends the day with George. He would get a date, really, he *would*, but rewatching his favorite episodes of *Game of Thrones* and making a half-burnt dinner together will always sound more appealing.

This was neither here nor there, though, not when Karl, with too much formality, announces, "George, you look like you went through the most traumatizing experience of your life, and," he

doesn't look up from the television screen, "to be honest, you're scaring the kids." When both Sapnap and George both send him incredulous looks, he clarifies, "I'm the kids."

George snorts, shaking his head as he slumps into the material of the soft sofa. Dream offers him a reassuring pat on the knee from where he sits beside him.

"I did," George clarifies. "Go through the most traumatizing experience, I mean."

Dream, intrigued, questions, "What?"

Karl furiously jams a button on his controller as he answers for him, "He's being dramatic. Sarah Reynolds asked George out today."

Dream, sometimes, is uncertain if they all even attend the same college. "Why does everyone assume I know who these people are," he mumbles, lost, and hears George let out a light giggle at that. Dream smiles.

"Because you do know her, knucklehead," Karl replies, tilting to the right as he swerves his player to a turn. "She sat in front of us in Johnson's class." At Dream's clueless look, he provides, "Blonde, green eyes, always wore a baseball hat, once borrowed my Puppycat pen and never returned it?"

"Oh," Dream realizes after the third thing. "I thought she was nice." Nicer than Dream, certainly, with her habit of saving him a seat and offering notes whenever he had missed a lesson.

"She is," George mutters, bringing up his hands to cover his face. His face can be barely seen, slowly blushing, and Dream wants to lean over and tug his hands away.

Sapnap looks away from the television screen to glance at George. "Then what's the problem?"

There's a muffled response from George, who keeps hiding behind his hands.

Silence.

"You rejected her," Sapnap reiterates, looking more lost by the second, "because she was too nice." He opens his mouth, lips forming an array of words before he eloquently settles on a loud, "What?"

George lets his hands drop as he sits up, suddenly defensive. "She was, like, *overly* nice. She wouldn't stop complimenting me."

Dream, feeling a little targeted, frowns. "I compliment you all the time." George likes his compliments, he's pretty sure. He's never asked him to stop, besides the occasional threat to Dream's life.

"You don't count," George rolls his eyes, like it was obvious, and Dream opens his mouth, looking for words that are yet to be found. He wants to know why he doesn't count. "She and I have never had a conversation that was not just her complimenting me. Each one leads to her buttering me up, which— it's nice sometimes, I guess, it's just," he groans, raising his hands to press his palms into his eyes.

Dream tilts his head, lightly nudging George, who drops his hands and looks at Dream. His frown lessens, and Dream's chest feels weird, suddenly. He wonders if the four-day-old takeout he had eaten earlier was coming back to bite.

“Just?” He prompts encouragingly.

“It’s awkward when I ask her how she feels about something, only for her to ask me how *I* feel about it before she answers with the same thing.” He shrugs, and Dream watches the movement, how George’s shirt bunches up at the collar from the motion.

“Aw,” Sapnap mockingly coos, high-pitched, “someone’s got a crush on our George.”

“I hope you and Karl break up,” George responds good naturedly, and Dream sucks in a startled laugh. George grins at it, summery.

“That marks, what, five, now?” Karl mentions, *First Place!* shining bright on the screen in gold. “There was that Martin guy, Brad, Sarah, Simon, and that other girl,” he furrows his eyebrows as he tries to remember, “I forgot her name.”

“Alex,” George provides tiredly. He slouches again, half his body slipping off the sofa. Dream almost wants to pull him up by the arm, pull him close. For body heat, obviously. Like penguins.

Sapnap raises his eyebrows, and George flushes. “What was the reason for rejecting her?”

“She kept talking to me,” George responds meekly, and all three of them stare at him for a moment.

“Dude,” Sapnap says, mouth agape, “*dude*. What is wrong with you?”

“Man is literally just rejecting everyone who shows interest in him,” Karl shakes his head, and George tosses a throw pillow in his direction. It narrowly avoids a lamp.

“No,” George protests, defensive, “I just have— high standards.”

Dream looks up from where he had been fiddling with his fingers, silent with not much to say, and is met with Sapnap, who spares him a look, before returning to stare at George when Dream squints at him.

“Right,” Sapnap says.

Dream opens his mouth because *why were you looking at me like that*, but any chance of further conversation diminishes when the doorbell rings, sudden and loud.

Karl stands up, sounding similar to a glow stick as he stretches, and shuffles over to the door.

All four pause at the sight of Quackity.

“Guys,” he says, holding a deflated kiddie’s pool, “I have a great idea.”

It’s later in the day, sky darkening with ink and a chill more prevalent in the air, when Dream starts up the car, George sliding into the passenger’s seat.

Dream is curious. He always has been, has always gone out of his way to do research on trivial things, and knows more about the radioactive properties found in bananas than he should. If Dream was a cat, he’d be long dead.

The ride is silent for all of twelve seconds before Dream, unable to help himself, asks, “Did you really reject her because she was too nice?” The question had been crawling up his mouth all

evening. He can't help it.

"Dream," George expresses, misery so present, "please."

"I'm just asking!" Dream defends, turning the car right and to the direction of their apartment. Maybe he should have simply turned on some music, but unfortunately, Dream has very little self control. "Is that really why?"

"Yes," George groans, and Dream watches out of the corner of his eye when he brings up his hands to his face. "She just— I don't know. She was nice, just *overly* nice. It was concerning." There's a pause, and after some consideration, he adds, "Maybe she just wasn't my type."

Dream hums, tapping his fingers on the steering wheel. A *type*. It makes his palms itch.

"What's your type?"

He almost considers jumping out of the car.

It's an unusual question to ask, especially since Dream has never inquired about such things. George must think him strange, he has to, by the following silence, and it seems to be growing worse when there's no immediate answer, and he forces himself to focus on the road instead of turning to look at George for some sort of reaction.

He doesn't know why asked, it's not as though he would be going out of his way to do some matchmaking for George; the idea of it makes his stomach turn uneasily, sea sick.

He had asked out of general curiosity, Dream decides. It's normal to want to know things about his best friend, including his ideal romantic partner, because Dream wants to know everything about George. In a friend way. To be a good wingman.

"I don't know," George finally says after a heart-stopping pause. "Someone who isn't— who doesn't just compliment me," he settles on, and Dream can see his hands tug on each other. "And doesn't talk to me obsessively."

"Obsessively?" Dream prods, and someone should duct tape his mouth, he thinks.

"A lot," George slowly answers. "Too much."

Dream stops at a red light. "We talk a lot." *He* talks a lot, clearly.

"That's different," George says, and it isn't, not really. He wants to ask why, why it's different, why he has to be different, why all these questions keep begging to be asked. "That's different."

Dream furrows his eyebrows. "How?"

"I don't know," George gestures, hands raising, and when Dream glances over, he almost looks pink in the face, probably from the red light. Dream looks away when it turns green. "It just is! It's— it's different."

"Okay," Dream replies, even if he's still lost, maybe more lost before he had said anything at all. "Um. What else?"

"I don't know," George mutters again. "I can't think of anything else— why do you care so much?"

Dream blinks at a yellow light, and slows down. "I don't know," Dream echoes, and then turns onto their street. "I was just curious. Your standards are very confusing, George."

“Your mom is confusing,” he says, and leans forward to turn on the radio.

Dream doesn’t know whether to feel relieved or not, he doesn’t even know why he *cares* so much, because he shouldn’t— he shouldn’t care this much, surely, he shouldn’t have questioned it further, shouldn’t have questioned it at *all*. And yet.

And yet, his chest feels wound up, his insides coiled up, a turning key into his ribcage, and it’s unsatisfying, how he sits in the driver’s seat with no reaction.

He breathes in, exhales noticeably.

He keeps driving.

It’s strange, afterwards.

Dream feels as though he’s overstepped, although he hasn’t, not *really*, and still, a shadow of regret stalks him through his day, and he knows it’s only one-sided. George shows no difference, no change in the way he talks to Dream, yet Dream finds himself unnaturally self-aware during their conversations.

He isn’t sure what’s wrong with him; it’s as though all the parts that had been on autopilot are now manual, and he’s conscious of it when he jokes back, when he offers no response, when he replies and pays too much attention to the way George reacts.

Maybe that’s his problem, now— he’s been paying too much attention.

George comes home every few hours, irritation set in his jaw, and Dream, biting the poisoned apple, will ask what’s wrong. George will complain about the newest suitor, and Dream will nod and listen, maybe hold his hand and pay too much attention.

“He always jokes too much,” George will say, flopping onto the couch, adding, “I don’t think he’s ever been serious in his life.” Dream will nod along to his rants, note down *doesn’t joke too much* in his brain, and furrow his eyebrows and wonder why he cares so much.

“She knew way too much about me! I don’t think I’ve ever told anyone my favorite movie,” George will exclaim, a late dinner with his cheeks bulging with food, and Dream will nod, and add *isn’t creepily obsessed* to some sort of untitled, mental list. He frowns at the irony, the fact he knows George’s favorite movie, and then ignores it all for the sake of his fragile mental health.

“Talking to them was like talking to a *wall*, Dream,” George will groan, and Dream will pat his head and add *a good conversationalist* onto his strange list that he refuses to title, and pretend to care a normal amount about George’s love life.

Dream knows it’s weird, how obsessive it must be to care so much about his best friend’s type, and even weirder to hold the qualities against himself and compare the difference, to have a strange tug in his chest when too many things don’t match up. He shouldn’t be hoping to be George’s type. That’s *weird*. He’s being weird.

Why do you care so much?

Dream— doesn’t know what’s wrong with him.

Simon's Flowers was established in 1949, and has somehow survived long enough to stay in the exact spot it had been founded in, with the same sign that has been repainted over and over again.

And now, approximately seventy-some years later, Dream stops by on his way to his family's house to pick up some flowers for his mother.

He had only begun frequenting a year ago, when he had first stumbled upon the place on Mother's Day and in desperate need for a gift. His mother, after dealing with him for so long, did deserve some flowers. It was the least he could do.

The same worker is there as always, an older woman with the same purple name tag that somehow said a different name each time, unless she changed her name every two weeks. Dream has no room to judge, not with his own name.

She's there again this afternoon, carefully wrapping brown paper around a bouquet of white flowers, and doesn't stir from the chiming bell at Dream's arrival.

He walks to the desk, looking around. The flower shop never changes much each time he comes in, yet he finds something new every visit. He doesn't remember the giant Keanu Reeves cutout in the corner.

The lady finishes wrapping, and sets it aside to turn to him. "Hello."

"Hi," Dream replies, feeling a little awkward each time. "I'm here to pick up an order for Dream."

She nods, before leaning over and picking up the same bouquet she had just wrapped. "Here it is."

"Oh. Okay," he blinks, and pulls out his wallet.

It's the same process each time, and he likes the routine steps they have, even if Dream is half sure it isn't intentional on the woman's side. Nonetheless, he likes it, the predictability of when he walks in with the chime of the bell following.

After he hands her his card, the lady will tap away and take his money, and then say, *Thank you, come again.*, and Dream will smile and say, *Have a good day.*, and he will leave and continue on his way to his mother's house.

Instead, the lady says, "Are you interested in our Season of Love offer?"

And, instead, Dream says, "The what offer?"

"Every bouquet of roses is fifty percent off," she explains.

Dream considers, until shaking his head in refusal. "No, thank you."

The lady hands back his card, and slides the bouquet over the counter. "Okay. Thank you, come again."

"Dude," Quackity barges into Dream's room one morning to say, "we just met fucking– the reincarnation of *God*."

“What?” Dream mutters smartly, head shoved into his pillow, and saliva probably on his chin. No one should be seeing him right now. Not like this.

“He’s exaggerating,” George sighs, clarifying as he follows Quackity into the room. He raises an eyebrow at Dream still in bed. “Didn’t you call me an hour ago?”

“Took a nap,” he mumbles, before yawning. “What do you want?”

“We met the *perfect* guy for George,” Quackity says, taking the liberty of sitting on Dream’s bed and part of Dream’s leg. “For me, too. He was perfect, except he had a beard, but that’s okay. I can fix him.”

Dream stares at Quackity, before looking at George, who looks back. He shrugs. Dream sighs.

“The perfect guy?” He decides to ask, hoping for some sort of clarification, and he receives it as Quackity nods.

“He was eight feet tall, blond hair, good looking. He kind of looked like you, now that I think about it, but he was attractive,” Quackity lists off, and Dream’s sleep-ridden brain struggles to catch up.

He blinks. “Did you just call me ugly?”

“He wasn’t eight feet tall,” George mentions. “He was like, six feet at most. Quackity is just short.”

“I’ll kick your ass,” Quackity responds, and picks up Dream’s blanket to bring up to his shoulder. “He could kick your ass. I’d let him kick my—”

“He was just some guy,” George interrupts. “He was nice.”

“*Nice*,” Quackity wiggles his eyebrows, and Dream sits up to push him off his bed. Quackity yelps in alarm and starts listing reasons why Dream should be banned from the country, and the previous conversation is forgotten.

Dream’s mind still lingers, however. He hates paying attention.

George hadn’t protested like he usually does when Quackity had described the man so positively, so clearly enthusiastic, and George had done nothing to suggest otherwise. Dream almost wants to hold onto George’s shoulders and ask firmly *Did you say yes?*

He doesn’t know why it makes him nervous, why he *cares*, yet he can’t stop himself, and Dream lets the strange feeling simmer in his stomach, until it’s late and Quackity has left and now it’s just him and George in his room.

George lays back, spine against Dream’s mattress, and he thinks, *This is not the time*.

“Any new suitors today?” He asks casually, and George’s eyes flick over to him, away from the ceiling he had been staring up at. They return back to the ceiling.

“Not really. Just one.”

“Oh.” He swallows. “Was it the guy Quackity mentioned?”

“Yeah.” George raises his arms to stretch, before dropping them dramatically. “He was nice.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. I’ve spoken to him a few times before, but I didn’t think he liked me like that or anything until now.”

Dream looks up at the ceiling as well. “Did you say yes?”

“No,” George answers, and Dream doesn’t know how to answer the odd relief he feels, as if some sort of burden has fallen off of him. He shifts where he sits, and tucks his hands into his hoodie’s pocket.

“Why not?”

George lifts his head where he lays. “Why do you care?”

Dream presses his fingers into his stomach, breathing in. “I don’t know. I’m just curious. Friends talk about stuff like this, probably.”

“Yeah? You talk about stuff like this with Sapnap?” George questions, and Dream scoffs, turning over to his side. He stares at the wall in front of him.

“No,” he rolls his eyes, “obviously not.”

He hears George move where he resides. “Why not?”

“I don’t know,” Dream shrugs, although he doubts it’s seen, “it’s just different. You’re just different.”

“That doesn’t make sense,” George replies. Dream exhales, and makes no motion to argue. It doesn’t make sense.

There is a beating silence that comes afterwards, and Dream would let it sit longer, except the curiosity is killing him.

“Why’d you say no?”

“I don’t know,” George answers, and neither of them seem to know anything, it seems. “He was just– he wasn’t my type.”

His *type*.

Dream frowns.

“I’m starting to think no one’s your type, George,” he says, and maybe that was the wrong thing to have said, because there’s a beat, before–

“What’s that meant to mean?”

Dream looks over at George. “I didn’t mean it, like, in a negative way or anything, just that, you know. You get asked out a bunch.”

George furrows his eyebrows. “So?”

Dream is digging himself in a hole. “And you never say yes.”

“So?”

“So I was just wondering what kind of person you would say yes to,” Dream bites out, and it feels wrong, it feels dishonest, but he says it anyway, and George keeps staring at him. He’s pretty sure neither of them believe it.

It’d be a good reason to not believe it, and maybe that’s because Dream doesn’t know the answer either.

Perhaps it’s for the fact that it sets his heart on fire, drenched in gasoline whenever George mentions a new person, a new confession, as if it doesn’t matter at all, and it doesn’t, it doesn’t matter. Dream is just acting strange, and the worst part, Dream thinks, is not knowing *why* he’s acting so strange, now, as if the car ride home has sent him down some sort of rabbit hole.

And, strangest of all, Dream feels jealousy run through his veins, accompanying his blood, an ugly green whenever he thinks of everyone who had the bravery of confessing to George, because at least they knew what they wanted, what they were asking for, what they were seeking and causing the thrum of their heart.

Dream has nothing. He has nothing to go off of, has no idea why he is acting so strangely, feeling so lightheaded at the odd turns of his stomach, the itch of his palms, the slight misstep in his practiced dance with George.

“Maybe I would’ve said yes to that guy,” George says after a long silence, quiet, and Dream shows no indication that he’s heard it except for the cracking of his ribcage. “I probably should have said yes.”

George stays on his bed for another minute, before sliding off quietly and heading to his own room.

It’s Saturday night, and Dream, like the incredibly popular guy he is, is spending it in the campus library with his class partner and trying his best not to give up on his own existence.

His head is giving him a more-than-mild headache, and he’s only on his fourth paragraph, and Dream thinks that if God is real, he is not merciful, because he’s half sure this library is some sort of purgatory. He wonders where his life went wrong.

Jane is quiet in her seat across from him, not much conversation between them when they’re both so focused on their work, and all of this is due in two weeks and he hates this. Dream wants to go home and lay down for a very long time.

When he blinks out of his haze of self-deprecation and mindless muddle of typing, the clock reads nine fifty-two p.m., and his stomach growls unnaturally. He frowns, saving his work and looking up at Jane, who is half-asleep, with her head resting in her hand.

He blinks. “Jane.” Silence. “*Jane.*”

She doesn’t stir, and he groans before looking around for his textbook. Dream leans over for his bag, nearly falling over in the motion of tugging out the large, over-a-thousand-pages textbook, and, after glancing at Jane again, he drops it onto the table with a loud *thud*.

Jane’s head slips out of her palm, and she yelps as she loses her balance and quickly grabs onto the table for balance. She, eyes wide open, whips around to glare at Dream. “What is *wrong* with you?”

“You weren’t waking up,” he answers, shrugging, and watches her roll her eyes before glancing at the time.

“It’s almost ten, don’t you want to go home?” She questions, closing her laptop and tucking it into her bag.

Dream nods. “I was about to start packing up, but, you know. You were asleep.”

“Oh,” she replies quietly, and continues collecting her things. “Thanks for waking me up, then. I appreciate it.” She stands up with her bag over her shoulder, and makes no move to leave.

“No problem,” he brushes off easily, and zips his backpack closed, before standing up and stretching. He yawns in the process, teary eyed as he glances at Jane. “Do you have a ride home or anything?”

“I’ve got a car,” she nods. Dream picks up his bag, and makes his way around the table.

They’re both silent as they head to the front of the library, and Jane holds the door open for Dream, and the air is quiet and cold when they step out. It’s a nice change from the almost suffocating warmth of the library, and Dream can feel the tip of his nose turning blue.

There’s scarcely anyone else on the orange-painted street, a gift from the streetlights overhead, and Dream checks his phone for any requests from George to pick anything up on the way home. His fingertips press into his palms, somehow nervous at the fact of George at home.

“Oh,” Jane begins suddenly, when they’re both paused in front of the library, and Dream turns to look at her, “I was wondering.”

He quirks an eyebrow, pocketing his phone. “What’s up?”

“I was wondering,” she repeats, fingers tugging on themselves, “if we— if you wanted, I mean, no pressure, but if you wanted to hang out? Monday?”

Doing homework on Valentine’s Day hadn’t really been a plan of his, but if Jane wanted to get it done so quickly, then he wouldn’t protest. “Sure,” he agrees easily, “I might have to call our study session a little short, though, since—”

“I didn’t— I mean, like,” her eyes turn to the ground, “like, as a date?”

Oh.

“Oh,” Dream says.

Usually, he spends Valentine’s Day with George, as the past three years would prove, but recently, the idea of spending even thirty minutes with the other man sent some whirlwind in his stomach, and he doesn’t know what it means, and it makes him *nervous* and he doesn’t even want to think about the implications of these strange feelings, and especially not when they’re about his best friend.

“You don’t have to say yes, or anything,” Jane continues, nervousness in her voice, “it’s— this is weird, probably, we’re just partners on a school project, but I— sorry, I hope I didn’t make this weird, you probably have plans already—”

Dream didn’t have any plans. George is usually the one to suggest staying in on Valentine’s Day, but neither man had spoken a word of it, and he had probably freaked George out, anyway, asking

too much about George's *type*.

Jane rambles on, and Dream thinks of George at home, probably waiting to complain about a new guy, and it isn't his fault, it never has been, but Dream feels bitterness seep into his stomach, and he makes up his mind.

I should have said yes.

It's Saturday night, the sky dark, and Dream answers, "I'd love to hang out."

When Dream gets home, George is on the couch, phone turned sideways as he watches a video on low volume.

Dream takes care to shut the door quietly, but George looks up anyway, hair mussed from rubbing against the armrest.

"Hi."

"Hello," George returns, voice raspy, and he clears his throat. "Hello," he repeats. "Where were you?"

"Library," he responds, taking off his shoes. He unzips his jacket as he speaks, feeling overly warm, suddenly. "Did you eat dinner?"

"No." George moves to sit up, yawning as he does so, turning off his phone.

Dream presses his lips together. He doesn't know why he feels so nervous. "I can join you in a few minutes, if you want."

"Okay," George says.

Dream nods. "Okay."

He heads to his room, making quick business of taking off his jacket and throwing it into his closet, ignoring the strange stuttering in his heart when he thinks about eating dinner with George.

They've done this a million times. They spend time with each other like this, and it's not unusual, not out of the ordinary, but something in Dream shakes at the thought of it.

When Dream returns, stepping into the kitchen, George is heating up their lunch from this afternoon and has poured two separate glasses of water. He has a white hoodie on. Dream shuffles closer, and doesn't know whether to mention the fact that the hoodie is his. He keeps his mouth shut.

George carries two plates to the table, and slides into a seat across from Dream, to the right. He hands Dream a fork. Dream takes extra care to avoid his hand.

"Are you okay?" George asks, eyebrows furrowed.

Dream shovels rice onto his plate, staring directly at his plate. "I'm fine, why?"

"I don't know," George mutters, "you've just been quiet. You seem tense."

"I'm fine," Dream repeats, although George hadn't really argued against it.

“Okay,” George replies, and conversation falls flat.

Dream knows it’s his fault, his short and dry attempt at conversing, yet he can’t find it in him to try again. It’s unfair to George, he knows, and yet his mouth stays shut, eyes glued to the table in front of him. He’s afraid he might blurt out something terrible stupid if he looks at George.

“Do you,” George starts, quiet, and Dream almost looks up, just to make sure George isn’t upset, but he shouldn’t be, he has no reason to be. “Do you have plans for Monday?”

Dream swallows a glob of rice, trying to swallow down his heart alongside. He doesn’t know why he feels so strange when he says, “I do.”

He can see a pause of movement from his right, and he shoves a spoonful of rice into his mouth before he says anything more.

“Oh,” George says, and he sounds different, and Dream really wants to look up. “What, um,” he clears his throat, “what kind of plans?”

“Someone asked me out,” Dream mumbles. “I said yes,” he adds, like it isn’t obvious.

“Oh,” George says again. “Okay. Have fun.”

Why are you acting weird, Dream wants to ask, *say something else. Say more. Why don’t you care?*

“Thanks,” Dream says.

The rest of dinner is spent in silence.

Dream tries not to think about it too much on Sunday.

It’s difficult, however, when George walks out whenever Dream enters a room, stays in his bedroom with the door locked until meal times, and insists he isn’t hungry until George is already done with his meal to go out and eat himself.

Guilt drowns his insides, and Dream isn’t sure what to do.

He’d apologize, but he isn’t sure what he’d be apologizing for; *sorry for asking too much about your type, sorry for acting weird recently, sorry for making plans on Valentine’s Day with someone that wasn’t you, I’ll cancel.*

He thinks about canceling. *I’ll cancel, and things will be back to normal, and my stomach will stop hurting.*

His stomach continues to hurt, and he doesn’t know why. He doesn’t know a lot of things, apparently. Dream has never liked not knowing.

Half of him is tempted to barge into George’s room, tear the door down and ask him for an answer to why it’s suddenly different, why he feels weird, why they’re both acting weird, why George is avoiding him, but George has never done well with confrontation, he knows this, they both know this.

Instead, Dream stays in his room, and waits for Monday.

Jane is nice.

Nothing is too remarkable. Dream stops by *Simon's Flowers*, and the lady asks, *Are you interested in our Season of Love offer?* and Dream says *Yes.*, and leaves with a bouquet of roses, fifty percent off.

Jane grins wide at the sight of them, holds them tightly and runs back into her home to place them away, and steps out looking lighter.

The day is spent in a coffee shop that Dream has never gone to, and Dream orders a drink Jane recommends and it's a little too sweet for his taste, but he likes it all the while. They go to the park later, and Jane fits her hand against his, and he lets it happen.

It's easy; conversation is easy, and the hours pass by easily, and Dream's stomach is easy.

His chest only hurts when the sky turns dark, and he thinks about telling George all about how the day went, how he had seen a cat in a backpack and thought of him, how he had held Jane's hand and had wanted to let go, how he had, despite the easiness, the pleasantness, had still wanted to go home and make a messy dinner with George.

"Today was really nice," she says, and Dream blinks and looks down at her, and Jane goes on her tiptoes and presses a quick kiss on his cheek. "I really enjoyed myself, thank you," she hurries to say, before rushing into her home.

Dream opens his mouth to reply, but she's gone, and he can feel her lip gloss on his cheek, and he turns on his heel and returns to his car. He drives three blocks away, before wiping it off on his sleeve.

His cheeks burn all the way home.

They burn when he parks his car, and when he walks up the steps to their apartment, and when he stands on their apartment and rubs at his cheek again, and when he opens the door and George is in the kitchen.

It's silent when they look at each other, George, presumably, making himself tea while he stands in front of the kettle.

Dream tugs at his sleeves, cringes at the smear of gloss at the cloth, and tucks his hands into his pockets. Neither of them move.

"How was it?" George asks, face vaguely disinterested, and Dream looks away.

"It was fine," he answers honestly. It *had* been fine. Nice, even. "How was— what did you do?" *While I was gone.*

George shrugs, turning away to pick up the kettle, pouring boiling water into his mug. "Slept. I called Quackity, earlier, too."

"Oh. Okay," Dream replies, and he's fidgeting again, he hadn't even realized. "I— um, I'm sorry. For not— we usually spend the day together, but well, you know. I'm sorry." The words tumble out awkward, and he should have practiced this, but none of his apologies have ever been rehearsed. Maybe this should have been the first.

"It's fine," George says, and the clink of his spoon follows as he stirs in sugar. "I don't care."

Dream doesn't know why it hurts, why he frowns almost immediately. "Oh."

Silence settles, and Dream doesn't have it in him to continue talking.

He trudges to his room, and goes to bed without changing his clothes.

Why don't you care?

George has never been quiet with Dream.

He is, by nature, loud whenever they're together. He's more introverted with strangers, quiet with people he isn't quite comfortable with, but, perhaps because they've been friends for so long, Dream can't remember George having ever been quiet with him.

It's something he had been glad for, happy that George had always felt comfortable with him, how he hadn't been afraid to push and pull and irritate Dream and make him laugh.

Before moving in with George, Dream had lived by himself. It had been quiet often, sometimes low music to fill the air, but, ultimately, there was not much chatter when the halls were only occupied by one, and Dream has never been loud, not the sort to talk to himself, no need to feel the silence.

He preferred the silence; his mind often runs wild, and additional noise would have him irritated, too much at once, and he could feel every strand of hair on his head and would go to a silent room to calm down and adjust his posture so he didn't want to jump out the window. Silence, back then, to Dream, had been good. Calm. Preferable.

Now, though, their apartment is awfully quiet, and Dream thinks he would rather never have a moment of silence again over this.

Maybe it's worse because he knows George so well, knows how the man is filled to the brim with things to say, so much life in him to fill every room with, and yet their apartment is so awfully quiet.

Dream doesn't know how long he's going to last like this.

It takes him three days to finally snap.

"You're ignoring me."

Dream has never described himself as patient, and it's obvious even now, because it had only taken three days straight of complete silence between them to have Dream break and show up at George's bedroom door, swinging it open with no regard for privacy.

Well. He had *knocked*, obviously, but it was still very dramatic.

He now stands in the doorway of George's doorway, arms crossed and a frown on his face as he stares at George, who sits on his bed, eyes on his phone. "Why are you acting weird?"

"I'm not acting weird," George replies flatly, the first thing he had said to Dream since Valentine's Day. He's indifferent as he doesn't look up from his phone, fingers moving to type something.

“You’re acting weird.”

Dream shifts. “I’m not acting weird.” He crosses his arms, and debates leaving the room.

“George.” No reaction. “*George.*”

“*What,*” George snaps, loud, and they both freeze. “Sorry,” he quickly apologizes, “sorry, it’s— I didn’t mean to.”

“It’s okay,” Dream says, voice a little quiet. “Why do— what did I do?”

“Nothing,” George replies, and it’s quiet all over again. “You didn’t do anything. Can you go?”

“George,” Dream’s frown deepens. This is the most they’ve talked in so long, it feels like, and he’s not letting this go. “Then why have you been ignoring me?”

“I don’t know.” George continues staring at his phone, but the screen has darkened, and he looks upset, and Dream needs to know *why*. “You didn’t do anything.”

“But you’ve been ignoring me,” Dream insists, resisting the urge to take a step closer. “I didn’t— I must have done something, right? What did I do?”

“You didn’t do *anything*,” George reiterates, placing his phone beside him. “It doesn’t matter. I don’t care anymore. Can you leave?”

Dream doesn’t budge. “Well, I still care. What’s wrong?”

“Nothing,” George says plainly, turning his body towards him, but he still doesn’t make eye contact. “It doesn’t matter anymore. Can you— leave?”

“It clearly still matters since you keep telling me to leave,” Dream breaks. “I just want to know what I did to make you so— *mad* at me. I can’t think of— I didn’t— was it because I kept asking about your type?”

George frowns. “No.”

Dream feels a little trapped, considering he can’t think of anything else. “Was it because I spent Valentine’s Day with someone else?”

George looks at him. “I don’t care about Valentine’s Day.”

Dream furrows his eyebrows. “Then why do you care who I spend it with?”

He stares back, until George says firmly, “I don’t care about Valentine’s Day.”

It doesn’t make sense to Dream, not at all, and he’s more than lost when George gets up and motions for him to step backwards. Dream listens, he always does, and frowns when he hits the wall of the hallway.

“You don’t care about Valentine’s Day,” Dream says. Asks, really.

“I don’t,” George confirms. “Can we forget about this?” He stands just a foot away, and Dream wants to step forward, do something besides stand here, frozen. “It doesn’t need to be weird.”

Dream frowns. “Why would it be weird?”

George stares at him. “Don’t be stupid,” he says, and shuts the door.

Dream doesn't understand.

He doesn't understand any of it; he doesn't understand George, he doesn't understand himself, he doesn't understand anything at all, if he were to be honest.

Maybe it would be helpful if he weren't sitting in his car, snow billowing down and the heater on blast while he tries his best to think rationally. He should be inside his apartment, asking for some sort of explanation, but he knows George would lock his door and let Dream rot in the hallway.

Perhaps that was a cruel assumption to make. Dream is lost.

He wouldn't be as cruel if George wasn't being so strange. He doesn't understand why he seems to care so much about Valentine's Day, and then insists he doesn't care. It confuses him. He hates this.

I don't care about Valentine's Day.

Dream doesn't know why he was so insistent on answer; had he been hoping to hear something in particular? What, that George *does* care about Valentine's Day, and then Dream would finally have some sort of closure, that, no, George doesn't care about Dream, he just cares about spending Valentine's Day with someone else.

I don't care about Valentine's Day.

Maybe then it would give him some sort of answer, similar to the sort Dream wants to hear, but it doesn't make sense when he doesn't know what he wants to hear.

It's irritating, not knowing himself. He doesn't seem to know anything about himself recently, the strange curl of his stomach, the flip of his heart, his immediate reactions to reassure George whenever he comes home, to tell him he's still here, as an option.

An option; he doesn't know what that *means*. An option to spend Valentine's Day with?

I don't care about Valentine's Day.

Dream frowns.

I don't care about Valentine's Day.

God, he's so stupid.

It's half past seven, and Dream really hopes the flower shop is still open.

He ruggedly parks his car, the door shutting loudly behind him, and he hurries to the entrance, unsure if it's open at all. It's snowing, white blurs in front of him, and his shoes are soaked through when he gets to the door.

He tugs, once, twice, and it doesn't budge.

"Fuck," Dream expresses eloquently, groans as he brings up his cold palms to his cold cheeks and presses in. It isn't the end of the world, it isn't, yet it feels like it is. He doesn't know what he's doing anymore.

He takes a few steps back, sighing, and turns to walk back to his car.

He pauses at the sound of a bell jingle.

“Do you need flowers?” Someone asks, and Dream turns around to see the same lady as always.

He nods. “Hi. Yes. Please.”

He doesn’t know why he had decided flowers were the right move; neither of them were particularly flower people, outside of George plucking dandelions from the sidewalk during the spring, and sometimes Dream comes home with a vase of flowers, but that didn’t count, not really.

“Are you interested in our Season of Love offer?” The lady asks when Dream walks to the register.

He pauses. “It’s not Valentine’s Day anymore.”

She shrugs. “Special offer.”

Unfortunately, Dream doesn’t know anything about flowers, and roses would be the smartest option, but he thinks of the confession George had gotten when they were together, the bouquet of roses that the man had left with, and cringes. He doesn’t want to be met with a similar fate.

“No thank you,” he answers, tugging at his own hands.

Dream doesn’t know anything about flowers, but he knows George. Maybe that’s enough.

The apartment is silent when he comes home.

George is still, presumably, in his room, and the sky outside is dark, the entire apartment is dark, and he can’t find it in him to make the extra effort of switching the light on when he struggles to untie his shoes with one hand and hurry to George’s door.

He takes a passing glance at himself in the mirror, before hurrying back. He winces at his hair, and swipes it away from his forehead. There’s still snow on his coat.

George has seen him worse, Dream reasons, and awkwardly shuffles to the door. He quietly clears his throat, and raises a hand. He knocks twice.

“George?” He is met with silence. “I’m– this isn’t good timing, but I wanted to ask if you– can you open the door, please?”

Dream chews on his lips as he waits, attentive as he hears for any sort of noise, and for all he knows, George could be asleep, a lack of light shining under the door, and yet. He shifts from one foot to the other.

“Please?”

The door swings open.

“Hi,” he says, and George looks tired. He looks wonderful in the dark light, just barely shaded blue, and Dream wants to lean close and fix his collar, brush the curl under his eye away. He has an eyelash on his cheek.

“What,” George replies. His voice sounds low, from sleep or disuse, he isn’t sure.

Dream tightens his hold. “I wanted to say I’m sorry, first. I already apologized earlier, but we usually spend Valentine’s Day together, and we didn’t this year, and it was because of me, so. I’m sorry.”

George stares at him. “I don’t care about Valentine’s Day, Dream.”

He ignores the blooming feeling in his chest at the sound of his name in George’s mouth. “I know, I just– I want you to know. Um, and I also– I wanted to ask you,” Dream starts, but the words grow dry in his throat as George keeps staring, no response.

“What do you want to ask,” George says, mouth set in a straight line.

Dream bites the bullet.

“Will you be my valentine?”

He’s sure his heart has stopped beating, frozen in his chest, and he’s still where he stands. George shows no reaction, except the slight twitch of his hand, and his eyes flicker between Dream’s face and the bouquet of flowers Dream had brought out from behind his back.

George raises an eyebrow at the flowers. “No roses?”

“I wasn’t– sure if it would be too cliché,” Dream stumbles to explain, “but I wanted to get you flowers anyway. I remember, um, you really liked cornflowers, from the time I got you those color-seeing glasses, and I– daisies suit you, so I,” he gestures, “asked for daisies, too.” He isn’t sure if they even look good together, but flowers are flowers, and George didn’t immediately recoil in disgust, so perhaps there were small blessings, after all.

“You’re asking me to be your valentine,” George begins, “three days after Valentine’s Day.”

“Well,” Dream’s stomach turns in, “I was kind of– I figured out my own feelings,” he cringes, he sounds ridiculous, “approximately an hour ago, so, um. But I was hoping that you’d be my valentine for next year.”

George looks at him. “Next year,” he repeats.

Dream nods. “Next year.” Maybe he should have kept his mouth shut.

“What kind of feelings?” George suddenly asks, and Dream should have kept his mouth shut, he’s sure.

He’s come this far, Dream reasons. There’s no going back now.

“I’m in love with you.”

George freezes. “What?”

“What?” Dream replies, feeling his cheeks grow warm. “I mean. Yes. What?”

George opens his mouth, shaping out silent words as he looks from the bouquet of flowers to Dream’s face to his slightly wet hair to the flowers to his face. “What?”

“Do you want me to say it again?” He asks, tilting his head. “I will, if you want. I’m in–”

“Please don’t,” George responds, and his cheeks are pink, and Dream wants to lean forward and do— *something*. “I don’t understand.”

Dream frowns. “What do you not understand?”

“I thought you knew,” George says, quiet, and Dream’s hands twitch. “I thought you knew I— you know. I thought that’s why you kept asking me about my type, and stuff.”

Dream blinks very slowly. “I’m confused.”

“I thought you knew I— *feel* the same way,” George huffs, and he looks frazzled, and Dream likes him so much. “That’s why I was annoyed you kept asking me about my type, because I thought you knew and were just— I don’t know. Rubbing it in my face.”

Dream can’t help it when he feels a flicker of hurt. “I didn’t— I wouldn’t do that.”

“I know,” George mumbles. “I thought you did, though. That’s why I was so, you know. Like that.”

“Oh,” he says, and then says, “*oh*,” because it’s all making sense, now. “Oh. I’m sorry.”

“Stop apologizing,” George tells him, frowning. “You didn’t do anything. Now you know. Properly. I, um. I like you.”

“You like me,” Dream echoes, feeling a little dazed, before straightening. “Can I kiss you?”

“You— *now*?” George exclaims, looking flustered, and Dream shrugs, having lost all dignity.

“Then when? I confessed, you confessed, we forgive each other, and I want to kiss you,” Dream shrugs, and George seems to only be growing pinker.

“This is stupid,” George decides. “You haven’t even given me my flowers.”

“Oh.” Dream looks down, before bringing them forward. “These are yours.”

“Thanks,” George replies dryly as he accepts, fingers brushing, and Dream bites his cheek, electricity running through him.

“Can I kiss you now?”

“Oh my God,” George says. “Please shut up.”

“Is that a no?” Dream quirks an eyebrow, leaning forward, and George rests a warm hand on Dream’s neck.

George tugs him closer. “No.”

“So it’s a yes?” Dream questions, smiling, and George looks unamused.

“Kiss me before I change my mind.”

And so Dream does.

Dream kisses him, kisses him *hard*, pushing and pushing and George pushes back and it’s easy and barely coordinated, teeth clicking, and there’s an entire bouquet between them and Dream thinks he should probably pull away for air, but he’s never listened to a rational thought in his life.

He can feel roses in his cheeks when he barely breaks apart to kiss George's cheek, firm and certain and establishing. George curls a hand into Dream's hair, tugs, and Dream suddenly pauses.

"What?"

"You never answered," Dream accuses, leaning away, and George looks lost for a moment, before it clicks and he groans.

"I just *kissed* you, I thought that was answer enough!" George complains, batting Dream away when he tries to kiss him again. "Idiot."

"Give me a real answer," Dream insists, and George gives him a look.

"This is stupid. You're stupid." He squints at him. "Ask me again."

Dream grins. "Will you be my valentine?"

"Okay," George answers, flushing, and Dream cheers, eyes bright. "Okay, stop cheering, you're an idiot." Dream doesn't cease, and George flicks at him. "Stop. *Stop*. God, you're annoying."

Dream grins at him. "You're mine. My *valentine*."

"Shut the fuck up," George says, and Dream kisses him again.

End Notes

calhan has made [incredible art](#) of this fic !!! it's absolutely beautiful please let them know asap !!!! :]

ari has also !!!! made [such sweet art](#) of this !!! go like it !! immediately !!!

hello i am currently a mess ! this was very difficult to write so i hope i pulled it off and that u enjoyed it at least even a little bit :]

i do not really write conflict that goes on for almost half a fic so . i hope it was pleasant to read ! i am nervous (as always)

also don't worry jane gets a very nice boyfriend who treats her wonderfully and they adopt a dog together

happy valentines day :D i hope u r feeling very loved !!!

as always, feel free to comment, kudos, and u can see me [here](#) or [here!](#)

thank u so much for reading !

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!